



Monday, November 11, 2013

[www.feweek.co.uk](http://www.feweek.co.uk)



Staff at Hawk Training celebrate the first Ofsted grade one result for an independent learning provider in more than a year

See picture caption on page 10

## Hawk high

Picture by Nick Linford

# Whitehead's bonfire of the quals

Chris Henwood

@Chris\_Henwood

Around 95 per cent of the adult vocational market's 19,000-plus qualifications could be axed under radical proposals to "de-clutter the system," *FE Week* can reveal.

The move, put forward by BAE Systems group managing director Nigel Whitehead in a review requested by Skills Minister Matthew Hancock, would leave just "hundreds" of qualifications.

Mr Whitehead's report, published by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills — in which he is a commissioner, said there were a number of problems with the current "complex, over-prescribed" system.

It was failing to "generate vocational qualifications that are valued widely or seen as a signal of marketable skills," according to his report.

Mr Whitehead recommended that Ofqual, the Skills Funding Agency and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills should use commission-set "design principles" as eligibility criteria for public funding of qualifications.

The design principles are aimed, among other things, at promoting greater collaboration between employers, awarding organisations and training providers to make qualifications more relevant to the workplace.

In conjunction with counting identical qualifications from different awarding organisations as

one, the report includes examples of how the design principles, which would be used over Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) rules, might hit the market for certain regulated qualifications.

It suggests a 50 per cent fall in engineering qualifications (to 166), an 81 per cent fall in adult social care (to 58) and a 72 per cent fall in retail (to 66).

Speaking exclusively to *FE Week* ahead of Friday's launch of his report, Mr Whitehead said his proposals would therefore mean the overall number of publicly-funded adult vocational qualifications should fall drastically from the current figure of more than 19,000.

"It'll come down to hundreds of recognisable qualifications across

the entire landscape as opposed to thousands," said Mr Whitehead.

He added: "I think awarding organisations should actually look at we are proffering here and recognise that what we are saying is that where there is the opportunity for innovation and where awarding bodies are really putting their thought into it, then that should be recognised."

The report also called for more information about the impact of qualifications, and said: "Our vision is of a de-cluttered skills landscape, making it easier for industrial partnerships to use the regulated qualifications system to align skills with vocational qualifications in their sectors."

The potential cull of 95 per cent of

qualifications would be the second such move in recent months.

Nearly 1,900 adult qualifications, that had little or no uptake, have already seen their public funding cease, as Mr Hancock pointed out.

He said: "We are already using elements of his approach to streamline and simplify the publicly-funded adult vocational qualifications offer, and will use it to inform our work as we drive to make our skills system more rigorous and responsive to the needs of employers and learners."

Glenys Stacey, Ofqual chief regulator, said: "We recognise and accept the challenge the report... sets

Continued on page 8, including a Q&A with Mr Whitehead

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## Edition 81

FE Week is the only newspaper dedicated to news, analysis, jobs and fun in the FE sector.

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## Top data return and funding software tweets:



@MJ\_BP00l  
After the R03 debacle, funding guidance V3 just released. Half our learners enrolled 6 mths ago! This madness can't continue



@AMadgett  
Have just uploaded my first R03; I wonder how long it will take to come back?



@SimonFranceFE  
I've heard of 3 separate instances where the FIS software by @TheDataService has wrecked a PC. I ain't installing that baby!



@joncarr1977  
Funding software delayed AGAIN. Sorry @TheDataService @skills-funding this is unacceptable



@TheDataService  
At close of R03, 807 providers had sent in 2,706 ILR files. 710 files were processed on the last day

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# Government 'not doing enough' over apprentice illegal wage investigations

Paul Offord

@PaulOfford

Just five per cent of complaints made over the summer about bosses paying apprentices below the National Minimum Wage (NMW) had been fully investigated by the government by late last month, FE Week can reveal.

Eight of the complaints, all registered between July and September, had been closed, prompting a scathing attack from Shadow Skills Minister Liam Byrne (picture right).

He said: "The government isn't doing enough to deal with complaints.

"It is simply appalling that HMRC [Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs] has closed only five per cent of cases where apprentices have complained about their pay.

"We need a radical overhaul of the system, to ensure apprenticeships are a gold standard once again.

"The apprenticeship brand has been badly tarnished on this government's watch."

The complaints situation emerged following an enquiry by Labour peer Lord Beecham (pictured right) with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), asking what steps were being taken to enforce the NMW for apprentices.

Of the complaints investigated, BIS said

that four apprentices were found to have been paid below the NMW, which went up 3p to £2.68 last month. They were owed £7,235 in total.

And Mr Byrne went on to point to government research that had shown 29 per cent of apprentices received less pay than they were legally entitled to.

But Business Minister Lord Younger (pictured right) defended the government's record on investigating apprentices' pay complaints.

He said: "The government is absolutely clear everyone who is entitled to the NMW should receive it. This includes apprentices.

"The government takes the enforcement of the national minimum wage very seriously and HMRC reviews every complaint that's referred to it — investigating the complaint and, in addition, carrying out targeted enforcement where it identifies a high risk of non-payment."

He added the government was so concerned about the issue that complaints from apprentices were now being "prioritised" by HMRC.

"We are also stepping up our communication activity to increase the level of awareness of the minimum wage rules across the board, including appren-

tices," he said.

"We want to help employers avoid falling foul of NMW rules unwittingly and ensure individuals are well-informed about their NMW eligibility."

Meanwhile, the government is yet to name and shame any underpaying apprentice bosses despite moves in the summer to make it easier to identify offending employers.

The clampdown, which applies to non-apprentices too, came into effect last month.

It comes in addition to financial penalties, of up to £5,000, employers face if they fail to pay adequately.

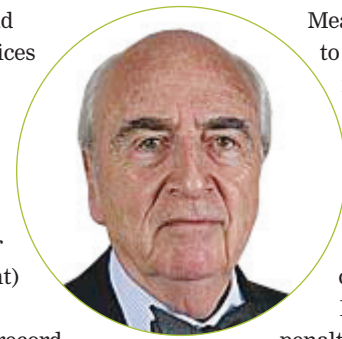
A BIS spokesperson said: "The revised NMW naming scheme will name employers that have been issued with a notice of underpayment by HMRC.

"It can take an average of 150 days for HMRC to complete its investigations before it issues a notice.

"The revised naming scheme came into effect on October 1, so an investigation that began on this date is not likely to be closed until early next year, as this will also have to factor in the appeals and representation process as part of the naming scheme."

Originally, employers had to meet one of seven criteria before they could be named.

The minimum amount of NMW owed to workers had to be at least £2,000 and the average per worker at least £500 before an employer could be referred to BIS from HMRC for naming. The revised scheme removes these restrictions.



## Training provider under investigation

Paul Offord

@PaulOfford

A London-based training provider is under its second investigation from the same awarding body following complaints from learners.

Bright Assessing, which provides qualifications for unemployed people who want to re-enter the workplace, is under the spotlight of NCFE (formerly the Northern Council for Further Education) once again.

The provider boasts a pass rate of between 95 per cent and 100 per cent, but it is being investigated over claims learners claims that courses are substandard.

A spokesperson for NCFE said: "Following complaints from a number of learners earlier this year, we conducted an investigation into Bright International to ensure that the training provider met our quality standards.

"We concluded this investigation on August 16, putting in place a detailed action plan, working closely with Bright International to help learners have the best learning experience that they can.

"On October 14, on the basis of fresh information shared with us by learners, we launched a new investigation into the organisation.

"We are currently at the initial fact finding stage, clarifying the nature of the claims that



have been made."

She added that the Skills Funding Agency and Ofqual were both being kept informed about the latest investigation.

An Ofqual spokesperson said: "We are monitoring NCFE's investigation into Bright to make sure we can be satisfied it is taking necessary steps to protect the quality and integrity of its qualifications."

An SFA spokesperson also confirmed it would also monitor the investigation.

Krissy Charles-Jones (pictured), Bright's chief executive, welcomed the new investigation and claimed the previous one had given her firm a "clean bill of health".

She said: "We welcome this opportunity to have our practices and procedures re-examined, even though we have already been given a clean bill of health by NCFE. It is only right that when people have concerns they are dealt with ap-

propriately, and we have re-examined our own procedures in the light of comments we have received as part of our commitment to continual improvement in all aspects of our work.

"We utterly refute the principal complainant's allegations concerning the management of their training. Bright has supplied NCFE with proof that this accusation is unfounded."

She claimed her firm trained 2,710 unemployed people in the last year, resulting in 81 per cent getting a job, 11 per cent going on to complete further training and 8 per cent remaining unemployed.

The SFA spokesperson said that Bright was a subcontractor and so did not receive public money directly. She added that this meant the SFA was unable to confirm how much government funding Bright received.

As a subcontractor, Bright would not be subject to an Ofsted inspection of its own.



# Call for ‘heads to roll’ amid software delays

Rebecca Cooney  
@RebeccaKCooney

College and training provider data staff have demanded action after struggling to submit accurate data because of problems with Skills Funding Agency software.

An *FE Week* survey on Thursday, November 7 — the day after the deadline to submit the return, known as R03 — found that just five providers out of 159 (three per cent) said they had a reliable funding report from the new funding information system (Fis) software.

Delays in supplying Fis meant providers were left with just eight working days to install it and remedy any errors in the return, and led to a call in a previous *FE Week* survey from four out of five data officers to abandon the data return completely.

Responding anonymously to the latest survey, data management staff called for the agency to take responsibility.

A data integrity officer at a large college said: “Heads should roll. We are going to be a third of the way into the year without any idea of what we have or might earn.”

A data and audit manager, also from a large college, said: “It is a nightmare. They wouldn’t accept this level of incompetence from us, so why should we have to accept it from them?”

Many providers are still struggling to install the software while others have reported glitches in the program once it is running.

An MIS manager at a small independent training provider said: “The whole R03 was a farce from start to finish. I cannot yet get Fis to work properly.

“Putting not fit for purpose software into the public domain is ludicrous and then expecting people to submit data was the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

A data analyst at one large college said: “We’ve had six people doing two Saturdays of overtime and we still can’t get a reliable picture of funding from the Fis.”

A learner systems manager at a local authority said: “They should pay all providers a compensation payment to cover all the additional work that providers have needed to do to cover the SFA’s failure to provide the system required.”

Of the total responses to the latest *FE Week* survey, which was posted on the information authority Feconnect forum as well as the CMIS-Network — a Jiscmail email discussion group, 83 providers said they had 1,000 or more errors, of which 11 had more than 10,000 and three had more than 20,000.

A total of 134 (84 per cent) said they had successfully submitted R03 data by the 6pm deadline on Wednesday, November 6, but more than half (81) said the data they submitted contained errors.

Just five providers out of 159 (three per cent) said they had a reliable funding report from the Fis software, with 124 (78 per cent) saying their report was unreliable and the remaining 30 (19 per cent) saying they did not know whether or not their data was

FE Week online survey			
Thursday, November 8			
159 responses			
Have you successfully installed Fis?			
Yes	121	76%	
No	37	23%	
Don't know	1	1%	
Did you successfully return your R03 ILR data?			
Yes	134	84%	
No	14	9%	
Did not need to	7	4%	
Don't know	4	3%	
If you made a return was your data errorless?			
Yes	56	35%	
No	96	60%	
Don't know	7	4%	
Approximately how many errors do you have?			
0	41	26%	
1 - 100	35	22%	
101 - 1,000	25	16%	
1,001 - 5,000	23	14%	
5,001 - 10,000	7	4%	
10,001 - 20,000	11	7%	
20,001+	3	2%	
Don't know	14	9%	
Do you now have a reliable funding report from Fis?			
Yes	5	3%	
No	124	78%	
Don't know	30	19%	

reliable.

Fis is part of a wider agency data collections and funding transformation programme, which has been developed to comply with the Cabinet Office’s new digital strategy, which includes using a range of both large and small software development companies.

Another element of the software upgrade which has still not been released is the Learning Aims Reference System (Lars) — an online tool which enables providers to, among other things, look up qualification funding values.

The agency said it would release a simpler, desktop version of Lars before the end of the month, and in time for the next data return deadline (R04) on December 5.

An agency statement said: “We have decided to publish Lars Lite as we will be unable to publish a fully functioning Lars search capability on The Hub in time to support R04.

“We still intend to implement the Lars service and will publish a revised delivery plan in due course.”



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# Elmfield probe ‘ongoing’ despite pre-pack sale

An investigation into Elmfield Training will continue despite part of the company having been sold to a nursing homes training provider, FE Week can reveal.

Elmfield, which was slapped with a notice of concern in June following a grade four Ofsted inspection result, contacted staff more than two weeks ago to say it was taking steps to put the company into administration.

Last week it announced that it had appointed Deloitte as administrators and the majority of the company would be sold to EQL, a subsidiary of CareTech.

The move followed allegations against Elmfield of malpractice, in relation to its apprenticeship contract with supermarket giant Morrisons, that featured in a BBC investigation.

It was alleged that Elmfield signed Morrisons staff up to apprenticeship programmes they had declined, enabling the provider to claim public funding for training.

A separate probe into such allegations was launched by the Skills Funding Agency which, it said, was continuing despite the sale of Elmfield’s non-Morrisons business.

An agency spokesperson said: “Our investigation into the allegations we have received concerning Elmfield is ongoing and we are currently reviewing additional evidence which has been supplied to us.”

A Deloitte spokesperson said the sale had secured more than 300 jobs and would ensure that around 5,700 learners on former Elmfield programmes would have continuity.

A CareTech spokesperson said the acquisition has been completed as part of a pre-pack insolvency of Elmfield for a total “cash consideration” of £1.5m. The on-going working capital costs of the business would be funded from CareTech’s cash, they said.

Farouq Sheikh, CareTech’s executive chairman, said: “CareTech is a principled provider of social care with a strong public service ethos.

“Our support services for young people in transition to adult life are well known for their outstanding results and for some time we have felt that a new division focusing on apprenticeships would enhance and support many aspects of our outcomes-based approach.”

Meanwhile, all new Morrisons apprenticeships are provided by NCG (formerly Newcastle College Group), but Elmfield still has responsibility for the learners it started.

But with Elmfield’s contract to provide training to staff at supermarket giant Morrisons not included in the sale, a number of staff working on the contract now face redundancy if no buyer can be found.

However, Elmfield staff working on the Morrisons contract were told by administrators, in an email seen by FE Week, that: “We are in advanced discussions with another provider with a view to transferring this contract to that provider. We hope to complete this transfer in the next few days.”

At the time of going to press, no buyer for Elmfield’s Morrisons contract had been found. There is no suggestion of wrong doing on the part of Morrisons, EQL or Care Tech.

# Surprise highs and lows for apprentices



Picture by South and City College Birmingham student Dave Patterson

From left: Peter Leyton, Crossrail Whitechapel site agent, with students Joe Buckmaster, aged 24, Lindsay Berry, 30, and Mohammed Borhani, 21, and Crossrail site agent Rob Smith. Inset: Luke Morton, 24

Rebecca Cooney  
@RebeccaKCooney

Six construction and engineering students saw buildings from a whole new perspective as they were whisked away on a surprise tour of two large-scale projects in London.

The South and City College Birmingham students had no idea when they arrived at

college that they would be off to explore the under-construction tunnels of the capital’s new 73-mile Crossrail railway line.

They also got to scale the dizzy heights of the Leadenhall Building — better known to Londoners as the Cheesegrater.

The trip, organised by awarding body City & Guilds as part of the Open Doors project ahead of the Skills Show, was designed to show the opportunities

apprenticeships could lead to.

Level three construction student Luke Morton, aged 24, said: “It has been a great experience, getting out and seeing large construction projects. It has given me an insight to what my future options and prospects may be.”

The day finished with the students taking in the view from another of London’s iconic buildings, The Shard.

# College boards warned about complacency

Paul Offord  
@PaulOfford

The leading figure behind a major review of the role of college boards warned there was “no room for complacency”.

Dr Sue Pember, who led the Association of Colleges’ Governors’ Council’s review, spoke about her findings in an exclusive FE Week webinar.

She called for an overhaul of the make-up of many boards, to ensure they represented the interests of local communities.

It also warned governors had a more important role than ever in ensuring colleges were run properly, as they were no longer monitored by the Learning and Skills Council/Skills Funding Agency or local authorities.

Dr Pember said: “Complacency, that’s what I’m talking about. Some people are just feeling very comfortable and they are not really questioning whether the board is fit for purpose.

“People need to make sure they have got the

right checks and balances in place and that the boards reflect their communities. We need to refresh and we need to do it now.”

She praised the association for carrying out a survey checking the make-up of colleges’ boards, which will be unveiled at the association conference.

Dr Pember said: “The results are still being collated but this report is a good thing because we will actually know more about now who is actually on the boards.

“The colleges need to do more to refresh because the make-up really affects their credibility.

“One of the things needed is more employers, who the apprentices work for, as governors.”

Association chair Carole Stott, who completed the webinar panel along with FE Week editor Nick Linford, agreed more representatives from the business community were needed.

She said: “You get a different perspective, a different way of working, a different way of scrutinising information. You also get different networks and contacts.

“I think it is a very patchy picture, when it



From left: Dr Susan Pember, Nick Linford and Carole Stott

comes to recruiting new board members.

“There are some boards that have no trouble, where people are almost queuing up to join, but it is not always the case.

“But it is a continuous task, where you have to constantly refresh, constantly look at the balance.”

They both warned governors faced a challenge interpreting government policies been passed in recent months affecting FE and skills.

Dr Pember said: “It is one thing to see what ministers want, but another to see how these actions are actually going to be managed by the colleges.”



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I have also helped many young people to overcome difficulties, encouraging them to believe in their own abilities and achieve all they are capable of. I’m so happy that Randstad helped me find this role. After all, we all have to have a sense that we’re needed. But it’s an important role in a wider sense too; any society that has pride in itself will help the more vulnerable people within it. That goes for the university, and for society as a whole.

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*Editor's comment***The Skills Show is our best kept secret, unfortunately**

More than 650 of our most talented and skilled young people will be in Birmingham over the coming days.

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The competitions take place at the UK's largest skills and careers event, spanning an area equivalent to seven football pitches.

Yes, it's time for the Skills Show 2013.

HRH the Princess Royal will pay a visit, but more importantly, will you and your students?

The sector speaks of raising participation, standards and aspirations — the Skills Show is an opportunity for exactly that.

We don't need the implementation of a pass, merit or distinction system to inspire young people to be the best.

Look at what's achieved at the competition finals next week for yourself, along with your learners.

Experiencing these skills competitions and the Skills Show will raise aspirations.

The Skills Show is far too important be the UK's best kept secret.

**Nick Linford, editor**

**Correction**

Profile interviews are best done when the writer and the subject meet face-to-face in a relaxed environment and have plenty of time for a good old chat.

The profile interview with Institute for Learning president Penny Petch, published last week, happened in exactly that way — there was no need for a second sit down with the Chelmsford College head of teaching and learning development.

Although the standfirst to our piece could have led readers to believe otherwise, stating that Mrs Petch "talks to talks to *FE Week*".

She did talk to us for the profile, but just the once. SM

**Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?**

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) with Corrections in the subject line.

**Royal seal of approval for Skills Show**

The Skills Show will be given the royal seal of approval by Princess Anne through her role as president of City & Guilds.

The Princess Royal, a member of Great Britain's 1976 Equestrian team, will attend the event at the NEC Birmingham on November 15, midway through the three-day event which closes the following day.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock, who last year won a charity horse race at Newmarket, was due to attend on day one.

Up to 75,000 people, including primary and secondary school children, FE students and adult learners, are expected to attend the Skills Show, which will cover an area equivalent to the size of seven football pitches.

Chris Jones, City & Guilds director-general, said: "We believe the Princess Royal's attendance will inspire young people about all of the options out there and go some way towards overcoming the false perception of academia as the only pathway to success.

"She shares our commitment to helping young people fulfil their potential."

The centrepiece of the show will be 70 WorldSkills UK national competition finals, in disciplines including welding, bricklaying, industrial electronics, game design, web design and hairdressing.

More than 650 competitors will take part.

They qualified ahead of 5,000 people who took part in 500 heats across the UK, during the spring and summer.

The finalists will battle it out over three days of tough competition, with the aim of winning gold and being named the best in their skill.

Keith Smith, the UK's official delegate for WorldSkills and Skills Funding Agency executive director, said: "I wish every competitor the best of luck.

"It takes hard work, determination and a high level of skill to compete against the UK's most talented apprentices and learners."

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## FE Week profile

# Don Hayes ~ his story

Rebecca Cooney

@RebeccaKCooney

**The board member of the Education and Training Foundation talks to FE Week.**

It is somewhat ironic that Don Hayes was not a fan of education as a teenager and left school at the first opportunity to start work.

Straight after finishing his O-levels, he got a job as a trainee manager at a concrete and clay manufacturing company, before leaving to help with his father, Gordon's knitwear and hosiery wholesale business.

"It's funny how I'm in FE now, because I don't think education was something I took too much," he says.

"I wanted to get out, I wanted to work. So I left and my father said, 'Well you've got to get a job', and I had three interviews in a week.

"One was with the civil service at the local tax office, one was with an insurance company and then there was this one with the concrete and clay company.

"Actually, getting a job in those days wasn't so hard, so I got three interviews and three jobs and had to choose.

"I don't know whether my dislike of school came from bad teaching or whether it was just me.

"Everyone else seemed to get on ok. It was a good school I went to. I think it was probably just that I wasn't ready to buckle down and be receptive to what was being taught — I only engaged with sports really."

The world of work, however, was an entirely different ball game for the dad-of-three, who declines to give his age.

"I seemed to have employability skills. I seemed to take to it straight away. The drive for me was there, but I don't know why that was, it wasn't anything I'd been taught in school," he says.

"Possibly, it was a personality thing — it must have come from my parents, I guess. They were very supportive, but they were hard workers and they were entrepreneurial."

Hayes explained his mother, Doris, may have been from a generation where women were expected to concentrate on bringing up their children, but she still went on to launch a costume jewellery wholesale company.

When his father needed help with his business, he went to work for him before moving on to a similar fashion and textile company.

Hayes was born in Birmingham, but the family moved with his father's job, first to Leicester and then to Nottingham.

"I think I can say I'm from Nottingham, as I've been in Nottingham since my teens," he says.

"But I still go back to Leicester for the football, so I've left something behind there too."

Youth clubs, it seems, have played a significant role in Hayes life, as it was during his own time attending one as a teenager that he met his future wife Christine.

"She was 17 and I was about 19 when we started dating. Then she left to go to London

for three-and-a-half years because she wanted to become a nurse and she was training at the Nightingale School, at St Thomas' Hospital. It's surprising it lasted with me stuck in Nottingham," he says with a grin.

The couple were married shortly after Christine returned from London.

The second time a youth club altered the fabric of Hayes' life was when he took on some voluntary youth work in his late twenties.

"I was running a predominately afro-Caribbean youth club on a deprived estate just outside the city and that opened my eyes a bit really, in terms of some of the difficulties facing young people there," says Hayes.

"It was a bit of an epiphany — I stopped wanting to work for profit and started to work more towards the good of the community and that's how I still feel."

So Hayes took on a job on a community project, helping unemployed people back in to work and has never looked back.

He was, he says, hoping to take a break, but so far, that hasn't materialised, and instead he found himself in his current role at Enable, an organisation that represents smaller voluntary FE organisations.

"Enable was formed just after the start of the Learning and Skills Council [LSC] and it was a sort of a response to it — local voluntary organisations were concerned about the formation of this massive government body and they wanted to be able to have a dialogue with this organisation," he says.

**"It's funny how I'm in FE now, because I don't think education was something I took too much"**

"The Nottingham Council Voluntary Service got all these organisations together as a forum, which the LSC could come and talk to, and organisations managed to persuade the LSC to give them £40,000 to make this forum more effective, so they could have a newsletter and so on and what they actually decided to do was to employ someone.

### It's a personal thing

#### What's your favourite book?

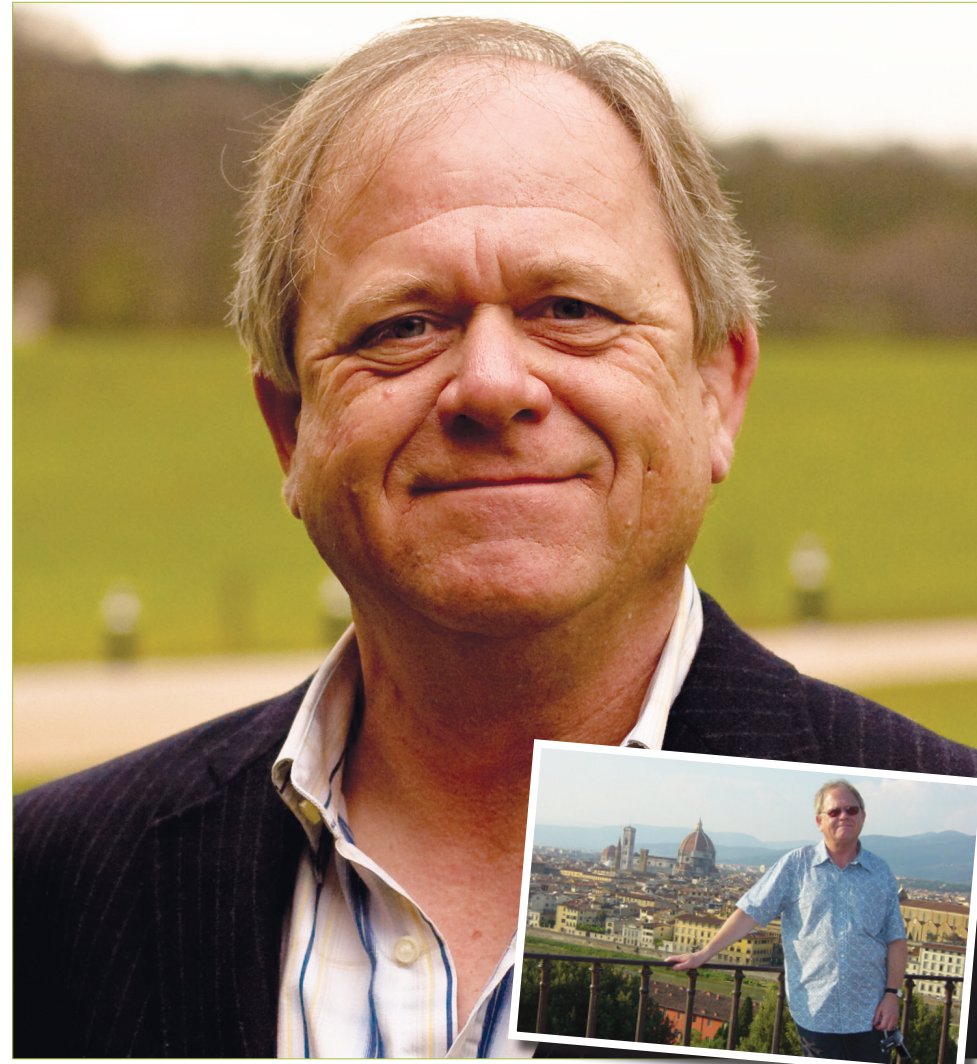
I don't really read many books, but the last one was Winter in the Hills by John Wain. I quite like Bill Bryson's Neither Here Nor There too

#### What did you want to be when you were younger?

A sports reporter

#### What do you do to switch off from work?

I support Leicester City, so I go and see their



Inset: Don Hayes on holiday in Italy

"This happened at a time when I was leaving my previous employer and I'd kept in touch with what was going on with this forum.

"I was going to have some time off after that job and see the places maybe I'd always wanted to go to and think about what I was going to do next.

"But then I thought 'maybe I quite fancy getting involved with this — I'll spend a year trying to see if I can develop the idea, and then I'll go off and do something else'. That was 10 years ago."

He and Christine visit Italy most years, "where there's always something to see", but if he were to take-off on his travels tomorrow, he says, Japan would be his ideal destination.

But it looks like Tokyo may have to wait, as he's also now a board member for the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), and plans to use the opportunity to promote the voluntary sector.

games. I also dabble in photography, but not as much as I used to

#### What would your superpower be?

Teleportation

#### If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?

My parents, my late brother Robert and John Lennon and Yoko Ono

"I still believe absolutely that voluntary organisations have a vital role to play," he explains.

"My particular interest is in deprived communities — people who are not accessing the opportunities that are available and always seem to be left behind.

"Where there's the creation of employment opportunities in cities, it's about making sure they'll actually get the jobs, and I see voluntary organisations as being key to that.

"We have to keep fighting because the voluntary sector kind of gets discounted or forgotten about."

The reason the sector gets "discounted" he says, is a lack of awareness of what voluntary organisations do, and a perception that the voluntary sector might be good at engagement but cannot deliver "hard outcomes" such as qualifications and jobs.

"What I find really, really frustrating is to still have to be saying the same things after 10 years about the sector, because people still haven't got it or people have moved on, so we do tend to get left behind," he says.

But he is hopeful the foundation will "very much have an impact" on this situation.

"I'm on it because I want to see the quality of FE driven up, and teaching in particular," says Hayes.

"But I also want to see the ETF not forget the voluntary sector and remembering there's actually a massive number of people out there delivering FE learning.

"We must make sure the sector's not forgotten."



# Adult vocational qualifications Q&A

Chris Henwood  
@Chris\_Henwood

The London HQ of BAE Systems played host to a Q&A session with Nigel Whitehead on Tuesday evening. The UKCES commissioner was interviewed on his review of adult vocational qualifications by *FE Week* deputy editor Chris Henwood.

## Why was the review needed?

There are two markets for skills in the UK — that which is funded and progressed by employers and the regulated government-funded market, and the two don't mesh.

There's a lot of government money spent on the creation of skills and capability in the UK and largely speaking employers, and particularly small employers, look at it and think, 'what's that all about?' and potentially therefore that is an inappropriate use of public funds.

## What do you mean by "inappropriate use of public funds"?

We see evidence that training providers are being paid to provide qualifications for individuals, but those individuals have sets of qualifications which aren't necessarily matched to the needs of the market.

There is a sense in the existing system that courses are being selected on the basis of ease of passing them, as opposed to whether they actually qualify you to work in a particular industry and sector and then become a passport for mobility within that sector.

## Successive governments have attempted to reform the adult qualifications market, so what's different about your review?

I thought that what I was going to be talking about was something that was really quite radical and unpopular and throughout the process of consultation I've gone out of my way to try and get all the potentially angry people in one room and get it thrashed out.

## What reactions were you expecting?

Currently there are 176 awarding bodies that we've found and I'm making some recommendations about how they interact with employers; the implication being that they're not doing that or they're not doing it well enough.

I thought they would see that a gross criticism and that in some way I was taking away from the very nature of what they do.

What I actually found is that those organisations or the people in them come to work wanting to do a good job and if you can say to them this is what better looks like they actually respond very well.

## When you said that learners are taking the wrong qualifications, is there a criticism there of awarding organisations?

I have a personal view that some organisations have pandered to the government rules on what it takes to actually get funding as opposed to focusing on what the employers need first and foremost, and to some extent that lets down the learner because they go



Nigel Whitehead (right) is interviewed by *FE Week* deputy editor Chris Henwood

through the process in good faith believing that there's something at the end of it.

## You refer to decluttering the system — does that include reducing the 19,000-plus regulated vocational qualifications?

I think it does. Having been through the arithmetic of it, there are some simplifications you can make where you acknowledge a qualification once rather than having 140 versions of it, which actually takes the numbers down significantly.

But one of the fundamental problems is that the system is impenetrable for either the learner or the employer.

As an engineering employer I know my way around the principal engineering vocational qualifications.

I can count on one hand the qualifications I could name and my counterparts across industry will talk in those terms, but if you actually expose them to the many qualifications that are on offer they would scratch their heads and say 'I don't really know where to start with this'. So there does need to be a decluttering of it.

Part of it is the titling and naming, but also the system has allowed I think, a plethora of potential solutions which has led to confusion, so I think with what we are recommending, in particular the issue about recognisable qualifications, we should get a coalescence around some major recognisable qualifications.

## What feels like the right amount of qualifications?

My personal view is that it'll come down to hundreds of recognisable qualifications across the entire landscape as opposed to thousands.

## So from more than 19,000 to potentially under 1,000?

Yes. One of the examples drawn to my attention was retail and the difference between Scotland and England were 140 recognisable qualifications in a particular branch of retail in England, but in Scotland the same area was covered by just five qualifications.

## Who decides on the qualifications to stop publicly funding?

I've made no attempt to do that at this stage. As we go through the process of putting principles in place and we test the qualifications against the new design principles in the report, and Ofqual looks at whether the awarding bodies have lived up to those new design principles, that will naturally end up with a selection and deselection of particular qualifications.

So there'll be a natural filtering of it as opposed to something that happens on day one and so from that perspective I would see it as a natural washing out of the old and an arrival of the new as people embrace the new design principles.

If there's government money going into this then the throttle on that money would be whether qualifications and training providers are actually meeting the new expectations set out in this report.

So in terms of the flow of government money there'll be a point which you say it either does or it doesn't satisfy, so in that sense there will be an ability to switch on and off the money and at the moment that falls through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

The adoption of the principles I would expect to see happen through the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the SFA.

The adoption of the principles and the regulation of the awarding bodies and ultimately a training provider is through Ofqual.

And if we're getting two 'no's at that stage than I be very surprised if government money was sanctioned and I would be surprised, in particular, if [Skills Minister] Matthew Hancock would allow that situation.

## Why introduce grading for competency-based qualifications?

It's a personal hang-up that simply passing a course is not enough.

I've yet to meet an employer who doesn't want to employ anybody other than the best people that come through, so in the greater scheme of things, a simple pass/fail works for some qualifications, but for the majority it

## Continued from front ... Bonfire of the quals

for us as regulator, working with others. We will reflect carefully on the report's recommendations as we review the QCF, and more generally as we develop strengthened arrangements for regulating vocational qualifications. We will be saying more in the coming months about our plans."

Chris Jones, director-general at leading vocational awarding organisation City & Guilds, said: "Cutting the number of adult vocational qualifications from almost 20,000 to a few hundred seems drastic at first glance, but we are in this position because of QCF accreditation rules and the role of the Sector Skills Councils.

"We fully support de-cluttering of qualifications. The ability to localise each qualification to meet the needs of both employers and individuals, without having it reaccruited, will certainly achieve this.

"What it really comes down to is ensuring employers own the requirements for their industry. The number of qualifications should be an outcome of their needs, rather than a centralised quota. Our recent research showed that over half of employers want to be involved in qualification design. That's why it's so important that the Whitehead Review focuses on employer ownership of occupational standards. Awarding organisations should not be guided by the whims of the SSCs."

A Pearson UK spokesperson said the awarding organisation would welcome a sensible streamlining of qualifications," and Rod Bristow, its president, said: "We look forward to working closely with UKCES, employers and other partners to consider the implementation of each recommendation in detail and ensure the proposals impact positively on the employer and the learner."

Charlotte Bosworth, director of skills and employment at awarding organisation OCR, said: "The qualification mountain and the inhibiting infrastructure of the current system has to go. Under the QCF, we've seen a vast inflation in the number of qualifications, driven by funding incentives not by genuine demand."

Jill Lanning, chief executive of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, declined to comment.

will be grading will result in learners wanting to do better because they can.

## Was your conclusion that there needs to be fewer qualifications, one that you were instructed by the Skills Minister to reach?

No, he didn't give any instructions. He asked for my view of the vocational skills landscape. The government gave me free rein to say my opinion and it cuts both ways because they can say 'that's just his opinion'.

But equally they can say 'we value his opinion'. So it stands alone in that regard, and no, I have not responded to any instruction from government.



FE Week expert

# Whitehead and the £40bn claim

**Is the claim, most recently made in the Whitehead Review, that employers in England spend £40bn on training true, asks Mick Fletcher.**

Ministers and government officials increasingly quote a figure of 'more than £40bn' as the amount spent by 'employers' on training. The implicit and sometimes explicit comparator is the £2.7bn spent by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) — a much smaller total.

The figures are often used, as in the Whitehead Review, to lend weight to the argument that employers should have greater power to direct public spending.

This article is not concerned with the policy implications of the data; that is for others to debate.

It simply seeks to answer three linked questions: are these figures accurate, do they tell the whole story and is the comparison fair?

The figure quoted comes from the National Employers Skills Survey (NESS) which reports findings from over 87,000 employer interviews scaled up to reflect the total number of enterprises across the UK.

The total, £49bn, is a UK-wide figure; the total for England on this basis would indeed be nearer £40bn.

It is important however to look to how the total is made up.

Just under half (£24.3bn) consists of the wages paid to those undergoing training, whether on or off the job, routine induction or advanced skills. Any comparison with spending by the SFA or other bodies needs to be on the same basis.

**“Only £4bn, less than a tenth of the total, is spent by employers on external training providers”**

Only £4bn, less than a tenth of the total, is spent by employers on external training providers.

This would be a fairer figure to use for any comparison with SFA spending.

The implication in many ministerial statements is that this is all expenditure by private employers.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock for example, recently stated in an Edge lecture: “Of the £40bn market for adult training in England, less than 10 per cent is funded by the

taxpayer.”

This is simply not true.

Many of the employers that spend the largest amounts on training are public bodies funded by the taxpayer.

The armed forces, for example, spend about £5bn per year; the National Health Service the same.

Local government and the civil service have considerable training budgets.

A full picture of who pays for training would need to include expenditure by individuals as well as employers and the state.

A true comparison would have to include (or exclude) the cost of trainee, or students' time, and a fair comparison would need to compare all the education and training of adults funded by the taxpayer with that funded by private employers and by individuals.

The £40bn headline figure glosses over this complexity.

Fortunately the Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning, hosted by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education commissioned work on this very topic. It sought to separate out spending by public employers from private expenditure, and added to the NESS estimates of private spending the considerable sum invested by self-employed people in themselves.

It estimated the amount spent by individuals through fees and loan repayments and it

looked at taxpayer support for private training through tax relief. It also added to the estimate of public funding the amount spent on higher education teaching (but not research) and the contribution of other government departments.

It did not however include the huge investment by the Department for Education in the education of those under the age of 19.

The research also estimated the opportunity cost of the time spent by individuals on education and training on the same basis as the NESS estimates of trainee wage costs.

The analysis can be summarised as follows: On a UK wide basis, total expenditure on adult learning provision amounts to approximately £55bn, or 3.9 per cent of gross domestic product.

Roughly £26bn of the total is spent from the public purse, £20bn on training by private and non-profit organisations and £9bn by individuals (including the self-employed).

The scale of public subsidy on vocational training is large; our estimate is that the various forms of tax relief amount to £3.7bn.

In conclusion the figure of £40bn comes from a reputable source. It is, however, wrong to represent it as expenditure by private employers and very misleading to compare it with the £2.7bn spent by the SFA.

*Mick Fletcher, education consultant and visiting research fellow at Institute of Education*



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# Hawk swoops for a grade one

Chris Henwood

@Chris\_Henwood

The 14-month wait for an outstanding independent learning provider (ILP) under Ofsted's current common inspection framework is over.

The education watchdog visited Twickenham-based Hawk Training (pictured below) late in September and on November 1 issued it with a glowing, grade one inspection result.

It was the first ILP to achieve the feat under Ofsted's latest inspection regime after 134 visits.

Hawk, a 1,300-apprenticeship provider, was rated as good in 2008, but this time won outstanding ratings overall and also for its leadership and management, and — key to its overall grade one result — teaching, learning and assessment. It was also rated as good for its learner outcomes.

"Highly-skilled and enthusiastic staff serve as outstanding role models for learners," it said in the report, which added: "Leadership and management are outstanding, leading to significant improvements in the quality of provision."

Its managing director, Terry Barnett, said: "We've worked very, very hard over the last

two years to get up the teaching and learning and assessment. We work very hard for all our people to get a certificate in teaching and learning and assessment."

He added: "At the end of the day, it's all about hard graft. It's about getting your head down, making sure your organisation is a quality organisation, working with quality people.

"I think one of the good things that always stood me in good stead, is always try and do business with nice people. You can't always do it, but if you can it helps a lot.

"I think we're fiercely proud of what we've done and what we've developed."

Hawk, established in 1988, delivers training in early years and playwork, business and administration, and team leading and management to a range of employers, including the government and Xerox.

Among its areas of praise from Ofsted were "considerable investment...in improvements to accommodation, information technology and resources for learning".

The report continued: "Tutors use their modern ICT equipment, a broad range

of software and additional learning resources well to enhance the learning experience for apprentices in the workplace."

Stewart Segal, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, visited the firm on the day its Ofsted report was released. He said: "Meeting the Hawk team, it is easy to see why the provision has been graded as outstanding.

"The facilities, the attitude and commitment of the staff are second to none and it is good to see that this has been recognised by Ofsted.

"Hawk Training is a real example of how work-based learning can deliver high quality, flexible programmes across a wide range of employers.

"We are delighted that Hawk Training has agreed to share some of their experiences at an AELP conference on December 10, when we will hear the feedback from the Chief Inspector's annual report."

Of Ofsted's 135 ILP inspections under its current inspection regime, in which providers must achieve outstanding for teaching and learning to stand a chance of getting the same grade overall, a dozen inadequate ratings have

been dished out.

There have also been 55 grade three, or requires improvement, judgments along with 67 at grade two, or good, plus Hawk's grade one.

"We hope that more providers will achieve outstanding and good ratings from Ofsted, but the new inspection framework is only a year old and we will continue to work with Ofsted to ensure that the key elements of work-based delivery are fully recognised within the framework," said Mr Segal.

"Examples like Hawk Training can only help improve the understanding of what a work-based learning provider can deliver for employers and learners."

Picture caption from front page — back row, from left: HR director Vanessa Jones, learning development team manager Clare Burden, operations manager Kathryn Osborn, learning development team manager Lianna Hulsdunk and apprenticeship recruitment manager Karen Penny.

Front row, from left: commercial director Crawford Knott, finance director Joanna Hayes, managing director Terry Barnett, operations director Jo Barnett and management information specialist Andy Tyrer.



## From the control room to swivel chairs, FE Week on tour



From left: Nick Linford, FE Week editor, and Kathryn Osborn, Hawk Training operations manager

**With the ink on Hawk's outstanding inspection report barely dry, FE Week editor Nick Linford and deputy editor Chris Henwood paid the Twickenham provider a visit.**

Set on the fourth floor of a grey, 10-floor office block next to Twickenham train station, one thing that Hawk Training seems to do well — apart from delivering work-based learning, of course — is understatement.

The relatively non-descript home of this very special outfit is bookended by a Travelodge at one end and a sports bar at the other.

There's no suggestion to the passer-by that within these walls is the first independent learning provider to have been graded outstanding in more than a year.

And, having enjoyed a one-hour tour of

the firm's premises, where I got to sample first-hand the warm hospitality of Terry Barnett's close-knit team of directors and managers, I am the first to broach the 'grade one' issue.

Clearly proud of their achievement, they were equally humbled by it and, in all honesty, seemed a little unprepared for the resultant attention it was always going to bring.

But that's not necessarily a bad thing — this is a provider, education and training is their business and that's what they're good at. Very good, in fact.

From the moment I set foot in the slick Hawk offices and typed my details into a touchscreen pad that then took my photo, before I was presented with a name badge sticker (complete with my mugshot), it was clear that there had been serious investment here — as mentioned in the Ofsted inspection



Chris Henwood, FE Week deputy editor, tries out a 'Node' chair

report.

Looking beyond the ultra-clean and modern facilities, it was attention to detail and investment in IT hardware that Terry was keen to show off.

One room was full of 'Node' classroom chairs from America (pictured above right) that swivelled relentlessly to accommodate left or right-handed learners, and also offered their own little storage space under the seat.

In another room, the latest high-definition cameras were remotely turning and zooming in and out to record a lesson, for the benefit of absent learners, from the 'control room' (pictured above left).

And the use of technology extended beyond the classroom, as the Skills Funding Agency has given Hawk permission to use electronic signatures, which means the few bits of paperwork on show are simply learner certifi-

cates ready to send out.

In fact, visually everything was almost too perfect. For example, it was hard not to giggle at the carefully spaced bottles of juice in the boardroom fridge — but that's no grounds for criticism.

Ultimately, it's not possible from my visit to comment on the quality of teaching, Ofsted (the experts) have done that, but if training providers and colleges want to see what can be achieved with a serious amount of investment in facilities and IT, then certainly head down to Twickenham.

Nick Linford



# while employers hit bottom

Rebecca Cooney

@RebeccaKCooney

Two big name employers have been hit with damning grade four Ofsted inspection results.

InterContinental Hotels Group Services Company (IHG) and G4S Care & Justice Services (UK) Ltd and were both branded inadequate across the board by the education watchdog in inspection reports published this month.

IHG, which incorporates Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn among others and offers intermediate apprenticeships in more than 23 of its hotels in England, came under Ofsted fire with not a single apprentice having qualified since its training began in 2012.

And G4S, which hit the headlines during last summer's Olympics when it failed to fulfil its contract to provide security for the London Games, was criticised in the report over low success rates, "insufficient" learning support and inadequate leadership and management.

The damning Ofsted gradings for the two employer providers come amid a number of high-profile reports — such as those by former Dragons' Den investor Doug Richards, jeweller Jason Holt and BAE Systems UK group managing director Nigel Whitehead — that have called for increased employer ownership of apprenticeship design and vocational qualifications.

Nevertheless, the Ofsted report on IHG, which had never been inspected before, said: "IHG has not provided sufficient staff or re-



sources to equip heads of department and operations managers with the skills and confidence to carry out their roles as assessors and verifiers on the apprenticeship programme.

"It has provided too few staff to manage, support and improve the delivery of the programme."

Hazel Hogben, IHG head of human resources, said the company was "disappointed" by the report.

She said: "Despite noting our staff's effectiveness in developing employees' skills and observing that IHG's approach to corporate and social responsibility is well understood and supported by its employees, they made a series of criticisms of our programmes which we have very much taken to heart.

"Last week we met with the Skills Funding Agency/National Apprenticeship Service to discuss in detail our response to the Ofsted report.

"As a result we have developed an in-depth action plan to address each of the concerns raised including speed of progress, quality assurance, monitoring and data capture.



"IHG remains committed to its goal of offering 400 apprenticeships between this year and 2015 and to ensuring that we receive a better judgement grade from Ofsted next time we are inspected."

Meanwhile, the G4S grade four result followed the firm's second ever inspection visit from Ofsted. The first visit, in September 2005, had also resulted in an inadequate grading.

However, commenting on the latest grade

four result, a spokesperson for G4S, which employs more than 5,300 people and offers apprenticeships for employees working in the prisons and secure care and training centres it administers, said: "As a large UK employer, we continue to be committed to a range of qualifications including apprenticeships and place great emphasis on creating long-term and sustainable programmes which support employees' individual development and future career paths.

"While the findings of the report are disappointing we do believe that, by working closely with Ofsted and our partners, we will be able to make significant improvements to the programme.

"Since the inspection was carried out, we have already implemented a number of the suggestions identified and are carrying out extensive reviews that will address other areas which have been mentioned in this report.

"This includes the introduction of lead assessors, and an enhanced governance arrangement which includes multi-disciplinary business support.

"We recognise that there is clearly more to do, however we have worked over the last three years to develop in-house programmes of learning that are mapped and assessed against National Occupational Standards.

"These have been endorsed by both Edexcel and Skills for Justice as meeting qualification requirements and have been identified as an area of strength in the report."



## APPRENTICESHIP REFORMS – SHARE YOUR VIEWS

### City & Guilds responds to the Government's reform to apprenticeships:

"With today's announcements, it's great to see Government putting apprenticeships into the hands of employers – building that link between education and employment is critical to sustainable economic growth. City & Guilds believes deeply in employer engagement in education, however it is concerning to see the lack of reference to Colleges, Training Providers and Awarding Organisations in the Implementation Plan. As we've found through our research into vocational pedagogy, educators play a critical role in helping individuals develop both technical and transferable skills."

**Chris Jones, CEO and Director-General**

We want to hear what you think. To join in the discussion simply visit [www.cityandguilds.com/apprenticeships](http://www.cityandguilds.com/apprenticeships)

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*FE Week experts*

# The impossibility of remaining silent in the face of injustice

**Further education increases justice through its combined economic, social and moral purpose and, says Toni Fazaeli, to do this it needs qualified teachers.**

In England, the FE sector aims to tackle social and educational injustices through offering around four million young people and adults a year excellent learning opportunities that give clear routes to good employment and higher levels of study, transforming a very large number of people's lives for the good.

A soul-searching and proper question to ask is whether we can do even better for our learners, and whether the exercise of any policies or freedoms might lead to increasing any injustices.

A cardinal principle in medicine, credited to Florence Nightingale, is that the first duty of any hospital is to stop the spread of disease.

In FE it is surely to stop any increase in injustices for our learners?

Amartya Sen's seminal thinking in his book *The Idea of Justice* helps us think about the tensions between freedom and justice, and identify possible boundaries in further education that should not be crossed because they are likely to increase injustices for learners. Sen argues that the critical assessment in diagnosing injustices involves considerations of freedoms, fairness, capabilities, duty, goodness, resources, happiness, wellbeing and, especially in our sector, learning.

A vital and topical question to consider is whether not having a national policy requiring initial teacher education leading to being professionally qualified constitutes an injustice for those starting to teach, and their learners. A reasoned moral choice has to be made.

Sen argues that reasoned discussion can accommodate conflicting positions, and that bad or weak reasoning needs to be confronted by better reasoning. To draw on weaker arguments that do not increase justice for learners — for example, that leaders in FE should be treated the same as vice-chancellors — is to sidestep what is important.

One person's freedom can be another's bond.

The freedom in today's national policy for a FE employer to decide whether those they employ to teach are trained and become qualified as teachers curtails the freedom of individuals to be trained and become professionally qualified to be the best they can in their practice.

Second, the employer's current freedom curtails any entitlement for young and adult learners, wherever they are in England, to be taught by individuals who are professionally trained and qualified for their role.

The third very significant impact of this freedom is a reduction in the likelihood of young and adult learners across the nation receiving the strongest chance of high-quality



learning and success in their studies and training.

The clear case for the positive difference that initial teacher education makes to the quality of teaching is articulated in the Institute for Learning's recently published collection of voices and evidence from the sector, "Should teaching qualifications be left to chance?"

These three major considerations show that the freedom currently given to employers will inevitably lead to an increased injustice for learners nationally, and also for teachers.

To test this thinking further, let us look at a parallel context. Which chief executives of hospitals are baying for the freedom to recruit unqualified surgeons, unqualified doctors or unqualified nurses?

Such freedom for individual hospitals as employers would surely lead to injustice for patients nationally, as well as undermining the credibility and public trust in our country's hospital system.

In a House of Lords discussion recently about the employment of unqualified teachers in state schools, Baroness McIntosh pointed out "knowledge, enthusiasm and, indeed, natural gifts may be necessary but they are not sufficient in developing professional competence".

We would not disagree if we were talking about train drivers or brain surgeons, she suggested, so why are teachers an exception?

Just as members of the public have certain expectations of health service professionals, I believe that parents, learners, businesses and communities have the right to expect consistent, high-quality teaching and learning, delivered by qualified teachers, as an unassailable contribution to economic, moral and social justice in our society.

*Toni Fazaeli, chief executive of the Institute for Learning*

## Funding proposals put apprenticeship growth at risk

**Plans to put businesses at the heart of future funding arrangements for apprenticeships risk driving away all but the most committed employers, warns Christine Doubleday.**

In June 2012, Doug Richard was commissioned by Skills Minister Matthew Hancock to conduct a major review of the apprenticeship system.

The government received his report enthusiastically and, in the summer of 2013, opened a consultation on proposals for reforming apprenticeship funding.

A full apprenticeship reform implementation plan is set to be announced by the end of the year.

The 157 Group responded to the funding consultation, which closed on October 1, and in common with many other key stakeholders — including Association of Employment and Learning Providers, Association of Colleges and Edge — voiced serious concerns about the proposals on the table.

While group members are passionate about apprenticeships as a means of increasing productivity and the future skills base, they urged the government to pause and consider a wider range of proposals to avoid putting at risk the progress that has already been made. Fortunately, there were signs during consultation meetings that the Department for Business Innovation and Skills is still open to other suggestions.

### “To improve the current system, we need to add to the options under discussion”

Like the government, we are keen for employers to take greater ownership of the skills agenda and be more proactively involved in apprenticeships.

However, the current proposal rests largely on the creation of a new funding mechanism, which gives the employer much more responsibility for accessing and using government money to deliver or buy apprenticeships.

The proposed funding model is based on a core model with three options, two of which put the employer completely centre-stage and a third which involves funding being claimed by providers from the government, only after they have been paid by the employer.

We see major risks in these proposals for the national apprenticeship programme as a whole and urge caution.

In our view, the proposals are based on unrealistic expectations.



Do the great majority of employers, especially small businesses, really have the capacity, desire or skilled people to tackle the bureaucracy and audit requirements associated with apprenticeship funding?

Aren't many smaller college and training providers likely to abandon their involvement in apprenticeships, in favour of less problematic and more economically viable provision for young people, if they risk delays in payment or reduced fees?

Is it realistic to expect a major new IT-based system to work effectively from day one?

In relation to apprenticeships, employers can be divided into three broad categories — those that are fully committed, those that do not get involved at all and employers that are only weakly committed.

The funding proposals could well lead to the disengagement of all but the most committed group, when we all want more employers to commit.

They represent a needlessly high-risk approach.

Our colleges have long-standing experience of working with small businesses, and this tells us they are looking for simplification and single points of contact rather than more control.

We believe that so fundamental a change should start with a realistic pilot phase, which would allow both mechanisms and their impact to be tested.

Also, there is time to learn from the pilots of Employer Ownership of Skills.

We are still awaiting the full results of these, and we need to learn from this experience before changing apprenticeship funding in a similar way.

Finally, more thought needs to be given to incremental reform of the current system of funding, seeking to improve for example the policing of unscrupulous providers.

We would urge everyone to get involved in the debate about a funding structure that can give apprenticeships fresh impetus.

To improve the current system, we need to add to the options under discussion.

Only in that way we can all go forward with a more robust system, which can fully achieve the potential of apprenticeships as a foundation of economic growth.

*Christine Doubleday, deputy executive director of the 157 group*



## FE Week expert

# 'Bite-size' qualifications can bridge gap to full GCSEs

**Post-16 learners need stepping stone qualifications to build up their confidence and skills before they re-take maths and English GCSEs, claims Carol Snape.**

There has been a lot of debate generated by the latest OECD report on numeracy and literacy skills.

But in the rush to blame and shame, are we in danger of missing the key point in this issue — how to meet the learner's needs?

Issue has been taken with the government's apparent ignorance of functional skills.

There has also been acknowledgement that, if employers require GCSEs to judge job and, increasingly, apprenticeship applicants' numeracy and literacy skills, something has to be done.

While that debate may be required, we also need to address the needs of those for whom achieving either of these feels a long way off.

As highlighted by National Institute of Adult Continuing Education chief executive David Hughes, if a learner has already had a bad experience with GCSEs, simply making them retake them is unlikely to see improvement in most cases.

This is why a different approach is required to boost learners' confidence and address specific areas of weakness.

Indeed this has already been recognised by the Skills Funding Agency, which, in February

last year, announced it would fund a new set of English and maths qualifications within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) to support learners' progression towards GCSE English and maths A\* to C or a level two functional skills qualification.

Such qualifications are now available and should form the basis of adult numeracy and literacy teaching, as they provide the necessary flexibility and responsiveness required by adult learners in particular.

**"A key benefit of enabling learners to achieve in small bite-sized chunks is that it can quickly boost their self-esteem and sense of achievement"**

The new QCF English and maths qualifications are bite-sized units of assessment covering the adult core curriculum.

They are designed to allow for targeting of



specific needs of learners.

A key benefit of enabling learners to achieve in small bite-sized chunks is that it can quickly boost their self-esteem and sense of achievement.

Experiencing early success through the achievement of a small award in a skill area they had previously struggled with can inspire

individuals to continue with the challenge of acquiring more skills.

These qualifications can be used creatively to address the specific needs of learners in different contexts.

This could for example be achieved by embedding them into vocational or academic courses of any length and over any period, or studying them as stand-alone awards.

They could also be used to support family learning, by providing formal recognition of the skills gained by parents learning numeracy or literacy skills to support their children.

Otherwise, they could be used as short, sharp boosters to provide bite-sized focus on weaker areas for students who just missed out on GCSE grade C, helping them to improve those areas while also providing an important confidence boost.

It is this flexibility that will allow learners to take highly personalised progression routes through the framework, moving vertically and/or laterally as they progress.

Giving learners the chance to take these new QCF qualifications can only benefit them and the future economy of the entire country.

Without this change in approach, we risk condemning these learners to repeating the same failures they experienced at school and turning them off learning for life.

*Carol Snape, chief executive of OCN Eastern Region*



**The new QCF English and Mathematics qualifications are bite-sized units of assessment designed to target the specific needs of learners of all ages at various levels in different aspects of English and maths.**

The OCN Eastern Region White Paper explores why, how and when you should use them, for example to:

- help address specific areas of weakness
- embed into a vocational or academic course
- use as a stand-alone Award
- support family learning

**Discover how you can use bite-sized English and Maths qualifications.**



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# FE WEEK AND ME | *The Finalists*



The scrupulous judging panel. From left: Lindsay Plumpton, NCFE , Shane Mann, *FE Week* and Rosemary Wilman Hon FRPS, Royal Photographic Society

A judging panel made up of representatives from *FE Week*, NCFE and the Royal Photographic Society had the unenviable task of selecting 16 finalists from more than 340 entries this year.

*FE Week* and Me, a competition organised by *FE Week* in partnership with NCFE, challenged learners in the further education and skills sector to submit a photo which represented college life.

The judging panel was so

impressed by the entries that its members decided to award four highly commended awards. These will be announced following the public vote.

The Royal Photographic Society is supporting the competition and will provide the winner with membership.

It is now down to the public to choose this year's winner — so feel free to check out the stunning images and choose your favourite.

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## THE BRIEF

Send *FE Week* a photograph that represents college life for you and be in with a chance of winning an amazing prize!

**WINNERS WILL  
BE ANNOUNCED  
ON TUESDAY 19  
NOVEMBER 2013**

## THE PRIZE

**NIKON D5100 DSLR  
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## HOW TO VOTE

Simply take a look at the finalists work displayed on pages 15 & 16 or within the supplement (pictured right & available for download at [feweek.co.uk](http://feweek.co.uk)). Once you have decided go to [feweek.co.uk](http://feweek.co.uk) to vote.





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HASAN CHOWDHURY



HARRISON ERIC DOWLING



TRIXIE GREENING



HARLEY TEDDS



CHLOE BAKER-COOPER



JAMAIN SHAQUIILE GORDON



LAUREN UNSWORTH



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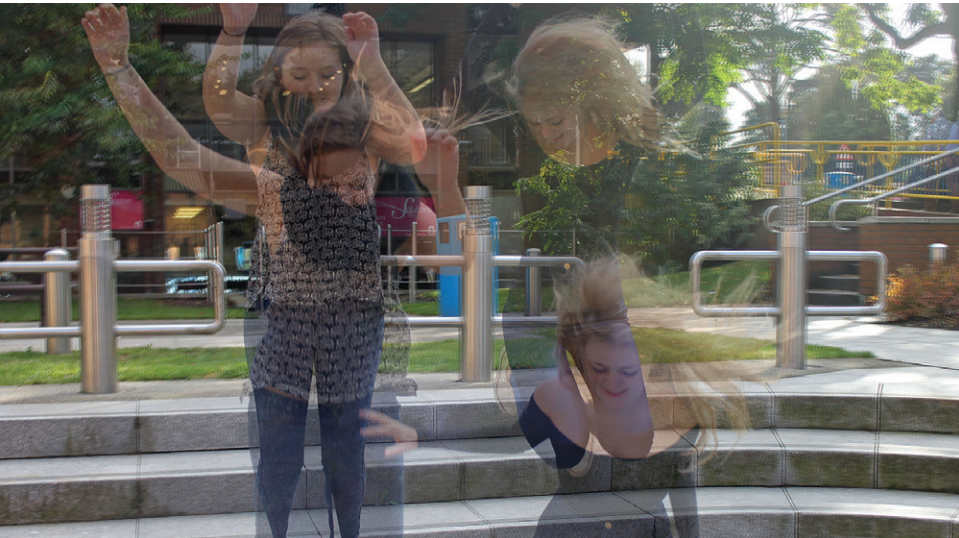


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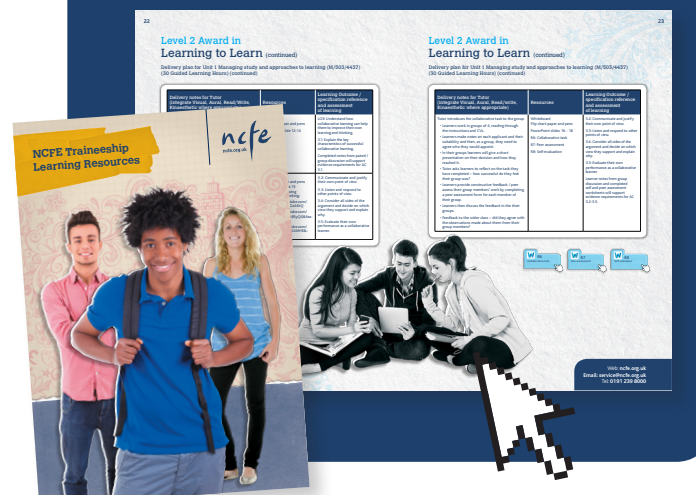
Choose any module(s) from the sections below to make up your traineeship:

- Preparation for Work
- Work Skills
- Personal Development
- Employability
- Maths and English
- NCT
- Enterprise
- Work Placement / Experience / Exposure

Build your Traineeship Programme

Module	Level	Duration	Assessment	Notes
Preparation for Work	1	1	1	1
Work Skills	1	1	1	1
Personal Development	1	1	1	1
Employability	1	1	1	1
Maths and English	1	1	1	1
NCT	1	1	1	1
Enterprise	1	1	1	1
Work Placement / Experience / Exposure	1	1	1	1

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to book an appointment with a member of the team!



# FE Week campus round-up

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## Ryan's happy that he went to Specsavers

A South and City College Birmingham student is glad he went to Specsavers after being named employee of the year in the Youth Achievement Awards 2013.

Ryan Goodman, aged 19, has almost completed his apprenticeship in retail level two at Specsavers, in Northfield, Birmingham.

As well as winning in the employee of the year category, he was also shortlisted for rolemodel of the year.

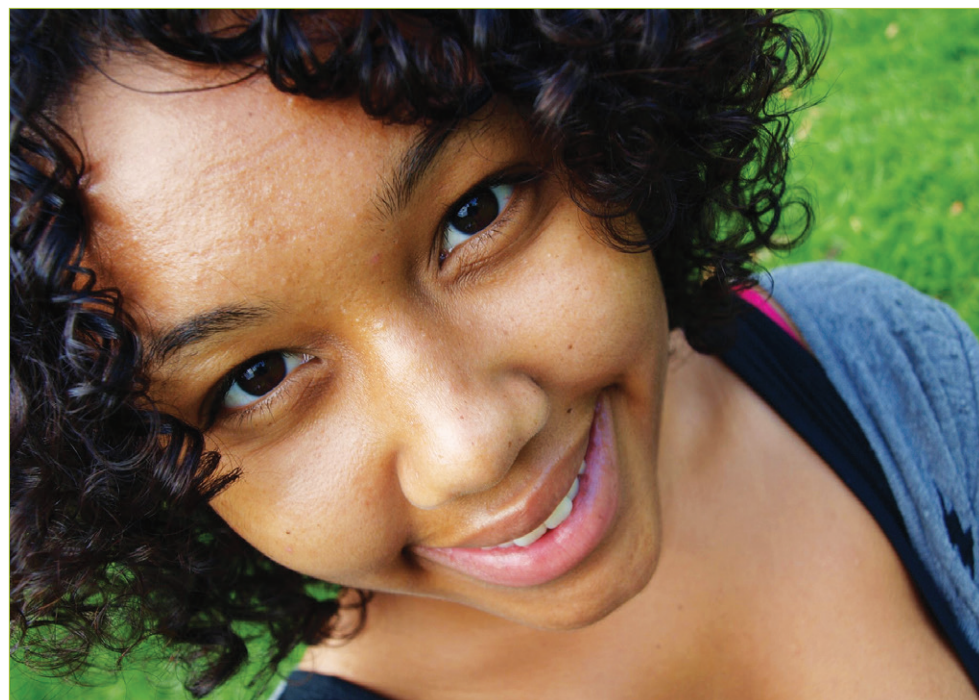
He was nominated thanks to his enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment to learning and developing himself.

Ryan said: "I am very pleased and surprised to have won. I knew my tutor had nominated me, but never thought I would be chosen."

Ryan's tutor, Murtaza Nazaral, said: "Congratulations to Ryan on winning — it is well deserved."



Employee of the year Ryan Goodman



Former City & Islington College student Carmen Rose-Locke

## Depression couldn't stop nursing dreams

A former London college access student has gone from sleeping rough and depression over AS-level failure, to winning a place on her dream university course.

Carmen Rose-Locke got her life back on track at City and Islington College after sleeping on landings and stairwells inside blocks of flats after running away from home in her teens.

The 20-year-old, from Wood Green, returned

to her family after four months, but became depressed after failing her AS-level exams.

However, Carmen never gave up her dream of becoming a midwife and, having done an access to medicine and biomedical sciences course, she has qualified for a three-year adult nursing course at King's College London.

She said: "I was determined to prove to myself, my family and peers I could do this."

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

A former director of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and acting chief executive of the National Open College Network has become the new governors' chair at Warwickshire College.

Sue Georgious (pictured below) has taken over from Bernard Doyle (pictured right), who, after two years in the role, has stepped down due to ill health.

She is currently also a director of PLS Associates, has an Open University MA in education management and lectured for a decade at Avon College from 1986.

A college spokesperson said: "Sue has experience of local, regional and national

initiatives with young people and adult learners, managing and leading national remits for government.

"She has active networks across the whole education and training sector and has worked with colleagues in Europe on vocational education initiatives both for schools and higher education. She is passionate about developing people and their potential."

She was at the agency for six years from 2004 and was with NOCN for a year from 2003, according to her LinkedIn profile.

Mr Doyle is expected to see out the year as a governor.



Amy Hall on board the Aurora

## Catering student cooks up a storm at sea

A student from West Cheshire College has returned from sea after winning a three-month placement as commis chef on a luxurious cruise ship.

Amy Hall, aged 22, from Cheshire, got the job with P&O after achieving an NVQ level three in professional cookery.

She demonstrated her culinary skills as well

as catering knowledge at the interview stage and, after a nail-biting week, Amy was offered a placement on the cruise ship Aurora.

Amy said: "My time on board Aurora was an extremely interesting experience. The best bits were definitely being able to travel the world and gaining independence by living away from home."

Send your stories with pictures to [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) including names, ages and course of students where applicable

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your college or training provider, please let us know by emailing [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)





From left: childcare students Jordan Ochiltree, aged 17, and Aisha Rashid, 18, academy of wellbeing assistant director, Tina Harrison, deputy director Kathryn Dixon, human resources adviser Jane Dawson and student counsellor Imelda Deheer

## College creates felt and knitted poppies

Remembrance Day gave students the chance to let their creativity bloom for a good cause with their own take on the Poppy Appeal.

Instead of paper poppies sold to mark the end of the First World War, Doncaster College staff and students made felt, crochet and knitted poppies.

They were sold for a £2 donation to the British Legion to help those affected by war.

Kathryn Dixon, deputy director of the Wellbeing Academy, said: "We wanted to do something different for poppy day and involve the creative talents from across the college."

People were invited to workshops to help create the poppies and Kathryn said the group had been inspired by the community feel of the project to carry on and make a knitted blanket for the local hospice.

## Students pull strings with theatre puppets



Northbrook College prop making and special effects students Liam White, April Hawley, both aged 20, Tristan Clarkson, 19, and Jennifer Coetzee, 20

Young prop-makers in Sussex proved they were no muppets at their job with their puppets set for starring roles in a production of Broadway hit Avenue Q.

Northbrook College prop making and special effects students created puppets for a production of the show by Ariel Company Theatre.

The props were designed by third year student Stephanie Farmer and then created by first year students Liam White, April Hawley, Tristan Clarkson and Jennifer Coetzee.

Prop making and special effects course leader Dan Jenkins said: "I'm really pleased

we got the chance to create these puppets.

"All the students are overjoyed with the result and Nicci Hopson, the client, is incredibly happy."

The production is due to be performed in August next year.



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# Charity single will honour talented music student's memory

**Talented music student Charlie Derrick died in a car accident 10 years ago. His former lecturers, fellow students and musician friends are uniting for a fundraising Christmas song in his honour, writes Paul Offord.**

A charity Christmas single is being produced by Weston College music department to honour the life of a gifted young guitarist.

Charlie Derrick, aged 20, was killed in a car accident in 2003 while studying for a BTec level three music practice diploma, at the Somerset college.

His mother, Jules Derrick, set up the Charlie Derrick Music Foundation to provide financial support for musicians under the age of 25 in North Somerset.

Many of Charlie's former musician friends, lecturers and students from the college are collaborating on a Christmas single, to be called Hope, to mark the decade since his death.

Jules said: "The foundation started because

at least 800 people came to Charlie's funeral. My husband Stephen and I didn't want them all to buy flowers, but we said they could make donations instead.

"Charlie's life was so consumed by music that we thought it would be nice to set up a foundation helping musicians with the proceeds.

"I have heard a demo of the charity single already and it is absolutely beautiful. The words express exactly what we are trying to do, which is give young people hope that they can pursue their dreams in music."

Paul Raymond, curriculum music and media manager at Weston College, said: "Charlie loved jazz and blues, but he was also a great rock guitarist.

"He would have been a talented session musician and I had actually offered him a job here as a guitar teacher, just before he died."

The lyrics to the charity song were penned by professional songwriter and former music student Ryan Inglis.

It was composed by former lecturer and session keyboard player Steve Williams, who will soon be going on tour with Boyzone.

"Steve played with Charlie in several bands and they were great friends," said Mr



Ryan Inglis wrote the words to the charity Christmas single in memory of Charlie Derrick (inset)

Raymond.

"We all performed together on the Jazz World Stage at Glastonbury in 2002.

"When he died, because playing at the festival was such a pivotal moment for Charlie, Michael Eavis allowed his ashes to be scattered in the field where we performed."

The single's backing track is currently being recorded at the college's studios, by music production lecturer Tony Hobden.

It was due out before Christmas.

Visit [www.cdmusicfoundation.org.uk](http://www.cdmusicfoundation.org.uk) to donate to the foundation.



John Rocha with fellow Croydon College alumnus Wendy Bray

## Designer likes the cut of students' work

Fashion designer John Rocha paid a visit to his former college to re-launch its art department.

John attended the college in 1974 and returned to watch a fashion show and view an exhibition of work by students past and present. He also met some of them.

Level three art and design student, Folajimi

Adeyinka, 18, said: "Meeting John Rocha was incredible.

"He asked questions about what I was working on and explained that with hard work and dedication my future was in my hands."

John was impressed with the work he saw, describing it as "outstanding" and saying the designs were "innovative and creative".



Sixteen of Richard Huish College's 19 students who will be representing the South West in a range of sports

## Sporting youngsters on the ball

Nineteen learners from Somerset's Richard Huish College have been selected to represent the South West in football, rugby, netball and hockey.

The students from the Taunton college made it through the British Colleges Sport (BCS) trials.

They are now preparing themselves for the next trial phase with the aim of making the final trial and gaining selection for the

national British Colleges Squad.

Harry Lee, college sports development manager, said: "This is a fantastic achievement by these students and thoroughly deserved. They have trained hard and performed brilliantly for the college in their respective sports.

"Selection into the South West squads is a just reward for their dedication and high performance level so far this year."

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See page 9  
for info about the  
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Experience at executive level is essential and relevant experience in a further education college would be a distinct advantage.

For an informal discussion relating to this role ring Malcolm Cooper on 07950 931389.

### Vice Principal – Curriculum, £65,000

Candidates should be a successful leader and proven achiever and be able to demonstrate creativity and innovation within the curriculum. A passionate educator you will be focused upon the achievement of students while responding to a continuously evolving series of business development opportunities.

The successful applicant will be expected to take responsibility for all curriculum and curriculum support functions and to contribute to the Senior Team's leadership of the College. Experience at executive level in a further education college is essential which should include knowledge of current and evolving funding sources and curriculum delivery.

While managing complex budgets and cost centres to achieve exacting targets, the successful applicant will be able to demonstrate an ability to develop strategies to deliver an exceptional student experience.

To arrange an informal discussion relating to this role call 01642 777101.

**Further information including a Job Description and Person Specification for these posts may be downloaded from the College website: [www.cleveland.ac.uk](http://www.cleveland.ac.uk)**

**All applications should be made by 12 noon on Friday 15th November**

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**Interviews: Friday 22nd November 2013**

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We are a good college with outstanding features (Ofsted May 2013) and we need a committed team player to help us take the further step to outstanding.

**Closing date for applications: 17th November 2013**

**Apply Online: [https://www.hirewire.co.uk/FE/1053284/THW\\_JobBoard.aspx](https://www.hirewire.co.uk/FE/1053284/THW_JobBoard.aspx)**



**SRC**  
Stockton Riverside  
College

**DIRECTOR OF STOCKTON RIVERSIDE COLLEGE (BEDE)****Stockton Riverside College has ambitious plans**

We have a newly-established Senior Leadership Team with the drive and commitment to take the College to new heights. We have made rapid progress and we want to maintain this impetus to deliver outstanding learning opportunities to our local community.

Our recently built sixth form provision is located in Billingham, approximately six miles away from the main College site. These stunning facilities provide an exciting and stimulating environment for our young people. They provide a wonderful opportunity to develop provision to further meet the needs of learners.

We therefore wish to appoint an outstanding individual to grow the education provision in Billingham and the surrounding area.

This is a role for someone prepared to work hard to make a difference to the lives of young people. In return for your commitment, leadership skills, ability to think creatively and desire to lead Stockton Riverside College (Bede) to higher standards of performance, you will receive the full support of the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

We encourage potential applicants to contact our Deputy Principal, Mick Hickey to discuss the post in more detail. Please arrange an appropriate time by emailing him: [mick.hickey@stockton.ac.uk](mailto:mick.hickey@stockton.ac.uk)

Further details of the post, including the job description, person specification and application form are available on our college website [www.stockton.ac.uk/inspire](http://www.stockton.ac.uk/inspire)

**Receipt of application will be acknowledged in all cases. The closing date for applications is noon on Monday 18 November 2013.**

**Interviews will be held on 28 and 29 November 2013**



# Be part of an Education and Training Foundation Expert Panel

The Education and Training Foundation is now looking for experts from across the breadth of the sector to inform, review and monitor its work.

We are creating four Expert Panels consisting of leaders, practitioners, academics, learners, and other experts from across the sector.

We are seeking their wide ranging insights relating to one of our four key priorities:

- Professional standards and workforce development
- Knowledge and intelligence
- Leadership, management and governance
- Vocational education and training

The Expert Panels are important to the Foundation as they are one of the ways we will ensure that we are truly sector-led.

Does this sound like something you want to play a part in?

Do you have the expertise to be able to offer a specialist view, representing the interests of others?

Do you have the skills to be able to enhance the professionalism of education and training?

Applications to join these teams of expert panellists are now being accepted. To find out more visit The Education and Training Foundation website [www.etfoundation.co.uk/vision/expertpanel](http://www.etfoundation.co.uk/vision/expertpanel)

**The deadline for submitting applications is Friday 29 November.**





worldskillsuk  
The Skills Show

# THE SKILLS SHOW

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## FE Week Sudoku challenge

9					7			
4				9	8		6	
	8	3			6		7	
					1		2	6
		4	2		9	7		
2	3		8					
	4		6			5	8	
	6		9	5				4
			7					9

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

	3						9	
	7	5		8	9			
4			2		7			6
3			4					
		9				6		
					5			4
7			9		8			1
			3	1		4	2	
	1						8	

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## Last Week’s solutions

6	5	9	7	4	2	3	1	8
7	2	3	9	8	1	6	4	5
8	1	4	5	6	3	2	9	7
2	4	7	3	9	6	8	5	1
1	3	8	4	2	5	7	6	9
9	6	5	8	1	7	4	3	2
5	8	1	6	7	4	9	2	3
4	7	2	1	3	9	5	8	6
3	9	6	2	5	8	1	7	4

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

2	9	8	3	6	7	5	1	4
5	6	4	8	9	1	7	3	2
3	7	1	4	2	5	6	9	8
1	2	6	7	4	3	9	8	5
7	4	5	2	8	9	3	6	1
9	8	3	1	5	6	4	2	7
8	3	7	6	1	4	2	5	9
4	5	2	9	3	8	1	7	6
6	1	9	5	7	2	8	4	3

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week’s* biggest and smallest fan!



“Mostly this week I have been learning where I live.”

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter [@daniellinford](https://twitter.com/daniellinford)